

DGuzik 30 Amos

David Guzik

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David Guzik



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(Amo 1:1)

Introduction

The following is a record of what Amos prophesied.¹ He² was one of the herdsmen from Tekoa. These prophecies about Israel were revealed to him³ during the time of⁴ King Uzziah of Judah and⁵ King Jeroboam son of Joash of Israel, two years before the earthquake.⁶

(Guzik)

Amo 1:1-15

AMOS 1 - JUDGMENT ON THE NATIONS

A. The man and his message.

1. (Amo_1:1) Amos the man.

The words of Amos, who was among the sheepbreeders of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.

a. **The words of Amos:** This book of the prophet Amos is the only mention we have of this man in the Old Testament. The books of 1 and 2 Kings or 1 and 2 Chronicles do not mention this prophet, and he should not be confused with *Amoz*, the father of Isaiah the prophet (Isa_1:1).

i. The name **Amos** means *burden* or *burden bearer*. Since most of the prophecies of Amos concern coming judgment on either the nations surrounding Israel or judgment on Israel itself, he was a man with a *burden*.

b. **Who was among the sheepbreeders of Tekoa:** It seems that Amos had no “formal” theological or prophetic training, though there was a “school of the prophets” known as the *sons of the prophets* at that time (1Ki_20:35, 2Ki_2:3-

15, 2Ki_4:1, 2Ki_4:38). Amos was a simple man, a farmer, who had been uniquely called to ministry.

i. Amos spoke of his background and calling in Amo_7:14-15 : *I was no prophet, nor was I a son of a prophet, but I was a sheepbreeder and a tender of sycamore fruit. Then the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said to me, 'Go, prophesy to My people Israel.'*

ii. Amos uses an unusual word to describe his occupation. Instead of calling himself a “shepherd,” the literal ancient Hebrew calls Amos a “sheep raiser.” Amos probably chose this title to emphasize the fact that he really was a shepherd, and that he did not mean “shepherd” in a symbolic, spiritual sense. The way God used Amos reminds us of the way He used the twelve disciples of Jesus - common, workingmen used to do great things for God.

iii. Amos was from Tekoa, a city about ten miles from Jerusalem. It seems that he delivered his prophetic message at Bethel (Amo_7:13), one of the southernmost cities of Israel - not very far from Tekoa.

c. **Which he saw concerning Israel:** Amos was primarily a prophet to **Israel**, though he will speak to many nations.

He served in the days of the divided monarchy (**the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash**). Most researchers date the ministry of Amos somewhere between 760 B.C. and 750 B.C.

i. When Amos served as a prophet, the people of God had been divided into two nations for more than 150 years.

The southern nation was known as **Judah**, and the northern nation was still known as **Israel**. Through the period of the divided monarch Judah saw a succession of kings, some godly and some ungodly (**Uzziah** was one of the better kings of Judah). The northern nation of **Israel** saw nothing but a succession of wicked kings. **Jeroboam the son of Joash** was one of the better kings among these wicked men - especially in a political and military sense - but he was still an ungodly man (2Ki_14:23-29).

ii. For most of its history, the northern kingdom of Israel struggled against Syria - her neighbor to the north. But around the year 800, the mighty Assyrian Empire defeated Syria, and neutralized this power that hindered Israel's expansion and prosperity. With Syria in check, Israel enjoyed great prosperity during the reign of Jeroboam II.

d. **Two years before the earthquake:** "We have no independent record of this earthquake, so *that* phrase is no help to us in dating." (Boice) 2. (Amo_1:2) The message of Amos.

And he said: "The LORD roars from Zion, and utters His voice from Jerusalem; the pastures of the shepherds mourn, and the top of Carmel withers."

a. **The LORD roars from Zion:** Amos brings a message of judgment. The first two chapters of Amos describe the judgment of the LORD, first against Gentile nations then against Judah and Israel.

b. **And utters His voice from Jerusalem:** Israel - in direct disobedience to God - established rival centers of worship in Dan, Bethel, and Gilgal. When Amos says that the Lord speaks from Jerusalem, he reminds all of Israel where the center of true worship is.

c. **The pastures of the shepherds mourn:** Since Amos was a shepherd himself (Amo_7:14) he knew how the judgment of God could effect the land. If God withheld rain, sent plagues, or allowed conquering armies to come upon the land, it made **the pastures of the shepherds mourn**.

d. **The top of Carmel withers:** **Carmel** was a prominent mountain in the north of Israel, the site of Elijah's dramatic confrontation with the prophets of Baal (1Ki_18:19-40). Since Elijah served before the time of Amos, it may be that Amos is reminding Israel of this victory of the Lord GOD over idolatry.

B. Judgment on the nations.

1. (Amo_1:3-5) Judgment on Damascus, the capital of Syria.

Thus says the LORD: “For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, because they have threshed Gilead with implements of iron. But I will send a fire into the house of Hazael, which shall devour the palaces of Ben-Hadad. I will also break the gate bar of Damascus, and cut off the inhabitant from the Valley of Aven, and the one who holds the scepter from Beth Eden. The people of Syria shall go captive to Kir,” says the LORD.

a. **For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment:** This “formula” will introduce God’s announcement of judgment against each nation. It doesn’t mean that **Damascus** only committed three sins, and then God thought of a fourth; it simply has the idea of “sin upon sin upon sin.”

b. **Because they have threshed Gilead with implements of iron:** The region of **Gilead** belonged to Israel, and God will judge Damascus and the Syrians for coming against the land of God’s people, and coming with such complete destruction that it is as if a deep plow had been run through the land.

i. *“Threshing sledges with iron prongs or teeth are probably a figure of speech implying extreme cruelty and utter thoroughness in the treatment of those who opposed.”* (Hubbard)

c. **The people of Syria shall go captive to Kir:** This was fulfilled in 2Ki_16:9, which describes when the Assyrians attacked Syria because King Ahaz of Judah paid them. *So the king of Assyria heeded him; for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus and took it, carried its people captive to Kir, and killed Rezin.* (2Ki_16:9) 2. (Amo_1:6-8) Judgment on Gaza, a city of the Philistines.

Thus says the LORD: “For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, because they took captive the whole captivity to deliver them up to Edom. But I will send a fire upon the wall of Gaza, which shall devour its palaces.

I will cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod, and the one who holds the scepter from Ashkelon; I will turn My hand against Ekron, and the remnant of the Philistines shall perish,” says the Lord GOD.

a. **Because they took captive the whole captivity to deliver them up to Edom:** **Gaza** was a city of the Philistines, on the coast to the west of Israel and Judah. Because they came against God’s people and did **deliver them up to Edom**, God will bring judgment against **Gaza** and the other cities of the Philistines (**Ashdod, Ashkelon, and Ekron**).

b. **The whole captivity:** “The condemnation here is not against slavery in and of itself, just as the previous oracle was not against war in and of itself. The crime is not that soldiers were enslaved after being taken in battle, which was the standard practice, but that the Philistines used their temporary supremacy to enslave whole populations - soldiers and civilians, men and women, adults and children, young and old - for commercial profit. Gaza did not even need the slaves. She merely sold them to Edom for more money.” (Boice) 3. (Amo_1:9-10) Judgment on Tyre, a city of Lebanon.

Thus says the LORD: “For three transgressions of Tyre, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, and did not remember the covenant of brotherhood. But I will send a fire upon the wall of Tyre, which shall devour its palaces.”

a. **Because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom:** Since the city of **Tyre** (of Lebanon, to the north of Israel) sinned against God’s people like the Philistines did (Amo_1:6-8), they will receive like judgment (**fire upon the wall of Tyre**).

b. **A fire upon the wall of Tyre:** The walls of a city were her defense and strength. If the walls were burnt, the city was defeated.

4. (Amo_1:11-12) Judgment on Edom.

Thus says the LORD: “For three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, because he pursued his brother with the sword, and cast off all pity; his anger tore perpetually, and he kept his wrath forever. But I will send a fire upon Teman, which shall devour the palaces of Bozrah.”

a. **Because he pursued his brother with the sword:**

The people of **Edom** descended from Essau, the brother of Jacob (later named *Israel*). In this way, the Lord can speak of the people of **Edom** as **brother** to the people of God, in that they share common ancestors in Abraham and Isaac. God promises judgment against **Edom** because they attacked Judah (2Ki_8:20-22).

b. **And cast off all pity; his anger tore perpetually, and he kept his wrath forever:** Edom held on to **anger** and **wrath** when they should have long before put it away. For this, the judgment of God is coming against them. We need to learn to give our **anger** and **wrath** to God, and let Him be our avenger.

5. (Amo_1:13-15) Judgment on Ammon.

Thus says the LORD: “For three transgressions of the people of Ammon, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, because they ripped open the women with child in Gilead, that they might enlarge their territory. But I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah, and it shall devour its palaces, amid shouting in the day of battle, and a tempest in the day of the whirlwind. Their king shall go into captivity, he and his princes together,” says the LORD.

a. **Because they ripped open the women with child in Gilead:** The area of **Gilead** belonged to Israel, and suffered attacks not only from Syria (Amo_1:3), but also from their neighbor to the west, **Ammon**. We could say that Ammon sinned against the *future* by killing babies in the womb.

b. **Their king shall go into captivity, he and his princes together:** Because of their attacks against Israel, God promises judgment again Ammon.

(Amo 1:2) ***God Will Judge the Surrounding Nations***

Amos⁷ said:

"The LORD comes roaring⁸ out of Zion;

from Jerusalem⁹ he comes bellowing!¹⁰

The shepherds' pastures wilt;¹¹

the summit of Carmel¹² withers."¹³

(Amo 1:3) This is what the LORD says:

"Because Damascus has committed three crimes¹⁴ —

make that four!¹⁵ — I will not revoke my

decree of judgment.¹⁶

They ripped through Gilead like threshing sledges with iron teeth.¹⁷

(Amo 1:4) So I will set Hazael's house¹⁸ on fire;

fire¹⁹ will consume Ben Hadad's²⁰ fortresses.

(Amo 1:5) I will break the bar²¹ on the gate of Damascus.

I will remove²² the ruler²³ from Wicked Valley,²⁴

the one who holds the royal scepter from Beth Eden.²⁵

The people of Aram will be deported to Kir."²⁶

The LORD has spoken!
(Amo 1:6) This is what the LORD says:

"Because Gaza²⁷ has committed three crimes²⁸ —
make that four!²⁹ — I will not revoke my decree of
judgment.³⁰

They deported a whole community³¹ and sold them³² to
Edom.
(Amo 1:7) So I will set Gaza's city wall³³ on fire;

fire³⁴ will consume her fortresses.
(Amo 1:8) I will remove³⁵ the ruler³⁶ from Ashdod,³⁷
the one who holds the royal scepter from Ashkelon.³⁸

I will strike Ekron³⁹ with my hand;⁴⁰
the rest of the Philistines will also die."⁴¹

The sovereign LORD has spoken!
(Amo 1:9) This is what the LORD says:

"Because Tyre has committed three crimes⁴² —
make that four!⁴³ — I will not revoke my decree of
judgment.⁴⁴

They sold⁴⁵ a whole community⁴⁶ to Edom;
they failed to observe⁴⁷ a treaty of brotherhood.⁴⁸

(Amo 1:10) So I will set fire to Tyre's city wall;⁴⁹

fire⁵⁰ will consume her fortresses."

(Amo 1:11) This is what the LORD says:

"Because Edom has committed three crimes⁵¹ —

make that four!⁵² — I will not revoke my decree of judgment.⁵³

He chased his brother⁵⁴ with a sword;

he wiped out his allies.⁵⁵

In his anger he tore them apart without stopping to rest;⁵⁶

in his fury he relentlessly attacked them.⁵⁷

(Amo 1:12) So I will set Teman⁵⁸ on fire;

fire⁵⁹ will consume Bozrah's⁶⁰ fortresses."

(Amo 1:13) This is what the LORD says:

"Because the Ammonites have committed three crimes⁶¹ —

make that four!⁶² — I will not revoke my decree of judgment.⁶³

They ripped open Gilead's pregnant women⁶⁴

so they could expand their territory.

(Amo 1:14) So I will set fire to Rabbah's⁶⁵ city wall;⁶⁶

fire⁶⁷ will consume her fortresses.

War cries will be heard on the day of battle;⁶⁸

a strong gale will blow on the day of the windstorm.⁶⁹
(Amo 1:15) Ammon's⁷⁰ king will be deported;⁷¹

he and his officials⁷² will be carried off⁷³ together."

The LORD has spoken!

(Amo 2:1) This is what the LORD says:

"Because Moab has committed three crimes¹ —

make that four!² — I will not revoke my decree of judgment.³

They burned the bones of Edom's king into lime.⁴
(Guzik)

Amo 2:1-16

AMOS 2 - JUDGMENT ON GOD'S PEOPLE

A. Judgment on Moab and Judah.

1. (Amo_2:1-3) The word of the LORD against Moab.

Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, because he burned the bones of the king of Edom to lime. But I will send a fire upon Moab, and it shall devour the palaces of Kerioth; Moab shall die with tumult, with shouting and trumpet sound. And I will cut off the judge from its midst, and slay all its princes with him," says the LORD.

a. **Because he burned the bones of the king of Edom to lime:** Moab was a southern neighbor to Judah, and the last of the six judgments Amos pronounces against the

Gentile nations in this section. God promises judgment against Moab because of their cruelty to Edom and her king.

i. We could say that Moab sinned against the *past* by desecrating the remains of an Edomite hero.

2. (Amo_2:4-5) The word of the LORD against Judah.

Thus says the LORD: “For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, because they have despised the law of the LORD, and have not kept His commandments. Their lies lead them astray, lies which their fathers followed. But I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem.”

a. **For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment:** It hurts to see the same judgment formula applied against Judah - the people of God - as was applied against the previous six Gentile nations. It shows that Judah piled “sin upon sin upon sin” just like the other nations.

i. We find it easy - and comfortable - to expose and rebuke the sins of those who aren’t the followers of God. That is what Amos did with the first six pronouncements of judgment, but just as Amos went on to look at sin among God’s people, we should do the same.

b. **Because they have despised the law of the LORD:** Judah’s sin was that they **despised** and disobeyed **the law of the LORD**. This is a higher accountability than God required of any of the six Gentile nations previously mentioned in Amos. God blessed His people with His **law** and **commandments**, but He expected them to honor and obey His word.

c. **Their lies lead them astray:** Since the word of God brings us *truth*, when we despise and disobey God’s word we naturally embrace and follow **lies**. You can’t reject the truth without grabbing hold of a lie.

d. **I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem:** Because Judah sinned like the other nations, they will be judged as the other nations, with

fire against them and their **palaces** (Amo_1:4; Amo_1:7; Amo_1:10; Amo_1:12; Amo_1:14; Amo_2:2).

i. The repeated use of **fire** to express judgment is continued in the New Testament. Without doubt, Amos meant material fire coming against material walls and palaces, but the Bible also uses **fire** in a spiritual way, to describe the purifying work of God in the believer. The Bible says that God will test the works of each believer with fire, to burn away what is unworthy (1Co_3:13-15). The Bible says believers will be tested by fire (1Pe_1:6-7).

ii. When we think of God's purifying fire, we should think the way Peter expressed in 1Pe_4:17 : *For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God.* We should invite God to burn down whatever "walls" or "palaces"

we build against Him, so His work can continue in us and through us without hindrance.

B. Judgment on Israel.

1. (Amo_2:6-8) The sins of Israel.

Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, because they sell the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of sandals. They pant after the dust of the earth which is on the head of the poor, and pervert the way of the humble. A man and his father go in to the same girl, to defile My holy name. They lie down by every altar on clothes taken in pledge, and drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their god."

a. **For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment:** The pattern continues.

Israel has piled sin upon sin upon sin, just as the previous seven nations.

b. **Because they sell the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of sandals:** Amos saw the injustice of rich against the poor, and how the rich took cruel advantage against the poor.

c. **A man and his father go in to the same girl:** Amos saw the sexual immorality and perversion of his day, and how standards once accepted were now disregarded.

i. This probably speaks of father and son using the same ritual, idolatrous prostitute. "They were licentious to the uttermost abomination; for in their idol feasts, where young women prostituted themselves publicly in honor of *Astarte*, the father and son entered into impure connections with the same female."

d. **They lie down by every altar on clothes taken in pledge:** Amos saw the idolatry of his day, and how people worshipped idols even as they cruelly oppressed the poor. Exo_22:26-27 commanded, *If you ever take your neighbor's garment as a pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down. For that is his only covering, it is his garment for his skin. What will he sleep in? And it will be that when he cries to Me, I will hear, for I am gracious.* The prophecy of Amos shows that God has heard the cry of the oppressed in Israel and will bring judgment against Israel.

e. In combination, the whole picture is almost overwhelming. Amos pictures a man committing sexual immorality with a temple prostitute - the same girl his son visited the day before - keeping warm with a garment extorted from the poor, toasting his success with wine bought with money dishonestly gained.

2. (Amo_2:9-12) The goodness of God to Israel and how they despised it.

"Yet it was I who destroyed the Amorite before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars, and he was as strong as the oaks; yet I destroyed his fruit above and his roots beneath. Also it was I who brought you up from the land of Egypt, and led you forty years through the wilderness, to possess the land of the Amorite. I raised up some of your sons as prophets, and some of your young men as Nazirites. Is it not so, O you children of Israel?" says the

LORD. "But you gave the Nazirites wine to drink, and commanded the prophets saying, 'Do not prophesy!'"

a. **It was I who destroyed the Amorite before them:** God reminds Israel of His past power and faithfulness to them.

When they first came into the Promised Land, they were afraid of the mighty nations like the Amorites. Yet God conquered them. How could they reject and despise a God who has done so much for them?

i. This principle - a walk with God based in gratitude for what He did for us - is important for the Christian, and shows why the believer must continually hear the message of the cross. We must live our lives in proper gratitude for what the LORD has done for us.

b. **I raised up some of your sons as prophets:** God reminds Israel of the great privilege they had in working together with God. Gratitude for this great honor should have kept them humble and obedient before the LORD, but they rejected and despised Him (**commanded the prophets saying, "Do not prophesy!"**).

c. **And some of your young men as Nazirites:** The vow of a Nazirite was a special vow of dedication unto the LORD, and God gave the gift of this deeper opportunity to Israel. Instead of receiving this honor with gratitude and humility, the rejected and despised the LORD (**you gave the Nazirites wine to drink**).

i. The vow of the Nazirite is described in Numbers 6 and was used to express a special desire to draw close to God and to separate from the comforts and pleasures of this world. Under the Nazirite vow a man would eat or drink nothing from the grape vine, would not cut his hair, and would not go near any dead carcass.

3. (Amo_2:13-16) Judgment to come upon Israel.

"Behold, I am weighed down by you, as a cart full of sheaves is weighed down. Therefore flight shall perish from the swift, the strong shall not strengthen his power, nor shall the

mighty deliver himself; he shall not stand who handles the bow, the swift of foot shall not escape, nor shall he who rides a horse deliver himself. The most courageous men of might shall flee naked in that day," says the LORD.

a. **I am weighed down by you:** God regarded the people of Israel as a weary burden, not as a joy. It is the difference between the pleasure a parent feels in dealing with a obedient child and the drudgery a parent feels in dealing with a stubborn, rebellious child.

i. Any time justice is perverted - any time the rich receive preferential treatment, or the poor are oppressed - it burdens the God who sees from heaven and He promises to set it right.

ii. Any time people cheat and manipulate and make money off of others in questionable ways - even if it is legal - it burdens the God who sees from heaven and He promises to set it right.

iii. Any time people unfairly profit at the expense of the unfortunate, it burdens the God who sees from heaven and He promises to set it right.

iv. "Now, it is to be understood, dear friends, before we proceed farther, that our text is but a figure, since God is not to be oppressed by man; all the sin that man can commit can never disturb the serenity of his perfections, nor cause so much as a wave upon the sea of his everlasting calm. He doth but speak to us after the manner of man . . .

so the Lord says that under the load of human guilt he is pressed down, until he crieth out, because he can bear no longer the iniquity of those that offend against him." (Spurgeon)

b. **Flight shall perish from the swift, the strong shall not strengthen his power:** One way the judgment of God would express itself against Israel was that they would find themselves unable to succeed in ways they previously thought they were strong. Without the blessing of God, **the swift** isn't fast enough, **the strong** isn't strong enough,

and **the mighty** isn't mighty enough to succeed. Israel was far too confident in their own ability, but God would bring them low.

i. We can escape this judgment by realizing *now* that even our strength is nothing without the Lord. Paul communicated this idea in 1Co_10:12 : *Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.* We can become more vulnerable in our perceived *strengths* than in our acknowledged *weaknesses*.

(Amo 2:2) So I will set Moab on fire,⁵

and it will consume Kerioth's⁶ fortresses.

Moab will perish⁷ in the heat of battle⁸

amid war cries and the blaring⁹ of the ram's horn.¹⁰

(Amo 2:3) I will remove¹¹ Moab's leader;¹²

I will kill all Moab's¹³ officials¹⁴ with him."

The LORD has spoken!

(Amo 2:4) This is what the LORD says:

"Because Judah has committed three covenant transgressions¹⁵ —

make that four!¹⁶ — I will not revoke my decree of judgment.¹⁷

They rejected the LORD's law;¹⁸

they did not obey his commands.

Their false gods,¹⁹

to which their fathers were loyal,²⁰

led them astray.

(Amo 2:5) So I will set Judah on fire,

and it will consume Jerusalem's fortresses."²¹

(Amo 2:6) ***God Will Judge Israel***

This is what the LORD says:

"Because Israel has committed three covenant transgressions²² —

make that four!²³ — I will not revoke my decree of judgment.²⁴

They sold the innocent²⁵ for silver,

the needy for a pair of sandals.²⁶

(Amo 2:7) They trample²⁷ on the dirt-covered heads of the poor;²⁸

they push the destitute away.²⁹

A man and his father go to the same girl;³⁰

in this way they show disrespect³¹ for my moral purity.³²

(Amo 2:8) They stretch out on clothing seized as collateral;

they do so right³³ beside every altar!

They drink wine bought with the fines they have levied;

they do so right in the temple³⁴ of their God!³⁵

(Amo 2:9) For Israel's sake I destroyed the Amorites.³⁶

They were as tall as cedars³⁷

and as strong as oaks,

but I destroyed the fruit on their branches³⁸

and their roots in the ground.³⁹

(Amo 2:10) I brought you up from the land of Egypt;

I led you through the wilderness for forty years

so you could take the Amorites' land as your own.

(Amo 2:11) I made some of your sons prophets

and some of your young men Nazirites.⁴⁰

Is this not true, you Israelites?"

The LORD is speaking!

(Amo 2:12) "But you made the Nazirites drink wine;⁴¹

you commanded the prophets, 'Do not prophesy!'

(Amo 2:13) Look! I will press you down,

like a cart loaded down with grain presses down.⁴²

(Amo 2:14) Fast runners will find no place to hide;⁴³

strong men will have no strength left;⁴⁴

warriors will not be able to save their lives.

(Amo 2:15) Archers⁴⁵ will not hold their ground;⁴⁶

fast runners will not save their lives,

nor will those who ride horses.⁴⁷

(Amo 2:16) Bravehearted⁴⁸ warriors will run away naked in that day."

The LORD is speaking!

(Amo 3:1) ***Every Effect has its Cause***

Listen, you Israelites, to this message which the LORD is proclaiming against¹ you! This message is for the entire clan I brought up² from the land of Egypt: (Guzik)

Amo 3:1-15

AMOS 3 - THE LOGIC OF GOD'S JUDGMENT

A. The logic of God's judgment.

1. (Amo₃:1-2) God's love and care for Israel makes their judgment unavoidable.

Hear this word that the LORD has spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities."

a. **Against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt:** Israel's rejection and disregard of God is all the more inexcusable in light of God's great deliverance. In His bringing Israel **up from the land of Egypt**, God proved His love and care for Israel; for God to speak **against** them shows He must have been sorely provoked.

i. The central act of redemption in the Old Testament is Israel's exodus from Egypt. All through the Old Testament, God calls Israel to look back and remember Him as the one who freed them from Egypt. The central act of

redemption in the New Testament - and in God's whole plan of redemption - is the work of Jesus on the cross. In the same way, we are called to constantly look back and remember what Jesus did on the cross and to live in light of that great fact.

b. **You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities:** God makes a clear connection between the great *privilege* of Israel (**you only have I known**) and the great *responsibility* this privilege brings (**therefore I will punish you**). If Israel thought that their standing as a specially chosen nation made them *less* responsible before God, they were tragically mistaken.

i. "The false deduction which is too often made is that if we are the privileged people of God, *therefore* we may look for His mercy, He will not punish us. That is not so. The measure of our privilege, in the Divine economy, is the measure of our responsibility. Therefore if we fail to fulfill that responsibility He will not pass over our sins, but rather will visit upon us all our iniquities. It is well that those nations who boast of the Divine favour, should lay this lesson to heart." (Morgan)

2. (Amo_3:3-6) The inescapable logic of God's judgment.

Can two walk together, unless they are agreed? Will a lion roar in the forest, when he has no prey? Will a young lion cry out of his den, if he has caught nothing? Will a bird fall into a snare on the earth, where there is no trap for it? Will a snare spring up from the earth, if it has caught nothing at all? If a trumpet is blown in a city, will not the people be afraid? If there is calamity in a city, will not the LORD have done it?

a. **Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?** In this section, Amos connects six statements that are obvious true. In our manner of speaking he might have said, "Is the Pope Catholic?"

b. If there is calamity in a city, will not the LORD have done it? The six statements of the obvious lead into a seventh statement, each one reinforcing this final point. When judgment comes against the cities of Israel, everyone should know that it was the **LORD** who has **done it**. It won't be an accident, fate, or "bad luck." It will be the hand of the LORD.

3. (Amo_3:7-8) The inevitable message of the prophet. Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets. A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord GOD has spoken! Who can but prophesy?

a. Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, unless He reveals His secret: In context, Amos speaks of the coming judgment upon Israel. God revealed this **secret** to His prophets, and it was prophesied for years and years before it happened so Israel would have every opportunity to repent.

i. God especially reveals the secrets of His coming judgment, so that men will have time to repent and no reason to be surprised. "Such *secrets* of God are revealed to them, that they may inform the people; that, by repentance and conversion, they may avoid the evil, and, by walking closely with God, secure the continuance of his favour."

(Clarke)

ii. We must remember the context of the prophet Amos, and understand that this *does not* mean that God does nothing without revealing it to a prophet first. In Eph_3:5 Paul describes how God deliberately hid the nature of the church (being a new body, not Israel and not Gentile) from Old Testament prophets. This is one example of something that God didn't announce or explain until it happened, without giving a prior revelation to a prophet.

b. A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord GOD has spoken! Who can but prophesy? Amos is saying, "Don't blame me. I'm only the messenger." As natural as it is for a man to **fear** when a lion roars, that is how natural it is

for the prophet to **prophecy** when the **Lord GOD has spoken**.

4. (Amo_3:9-10) The message of judgment against Israel goes to the surrounding nations.

“Proclaim in the palaces at Ashdod, and in the palaces in the land of Egypt, and say: ‘Assemble on the mountains of Samaria; see great tumults in her midst, and the oppressed within her. For they do not know to do right,’ Says the LORD, ‘Who store up violence and robbery in their palaces.’”

a. **Proclaim in the palaces at Ashdod, and in the palaces in the land of Egypt:** The city of **Ashdod** was a leading city of the Philistines. God invites the nations - represented here by Philista and Egypt - to come to **Samaria** (the capital city of the northern kingdom of Israel) and see their sin (**great tumults in her midst, and the oppressed within her**).

i. Hubbard on the choice of the Egyptians and Philistines as witnesses: “Their reputations for injustice and brutality would be resented by the Israelites, who would consider themselves in every way morally superior to those whom God had summoned as witnesses.” It will also “show that covenant law is not the only criterion for testing Israel’s behaviour but that by any standards of international decency they have become culprits.”

b. **Who store up violence and robbery in their palaces:** The rich and powerful of Israel used their wealth and power to oppress and steal from others. God invites the nations to see the sin of Israel, so they can understand the judgment He will bring upon Israel.

B. The destruction God’s judgment brings.

1. (Amo_3:11-12) Israel will be conquered and exiled.

Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: “An adversary shall be all around the land; he shall sap your strength from you, and your palaces shall be plundered.” Thus says the LORD: “As a shepherd takes from the mouth of a lion two legs or a piece of an ear, so shall the children of Israel be taken out who

dwell in Samaria; in the corner of a bed and on the edge of a couch!"

a. **An adversary shall be all around the land:** This was fulfilled in the Assyrian invasion of Israel, less than 30 years after Amos made this prophecy. For ten years, Israel was a subject state in the Assyrian Empire.

b. **As a shepherd takes from the mouth of the lion:** Exo_22:10-13 says that if an animal dies in the care of another man - such as a shepherd - that the shepherd must make restitution to the owner of the animal, *unless* he can bring remains that demonstrate the animal was attacked by a predator. "Amos' comparison, then, makes the sarcastic point that when invasion strikes Israel's devastation will be so complete that all that will be rescued is proof of death in the form of scraps of furniture." (Hubbard)

c. **So shall the children of Israel be taken out who dwell in Samaria:** This was fulfilled in the Assyrian exile of Israel, less than 40 years after Amos made this prophecy. After a little more than ten years as a subject state in the Assyrian Empire, Israel was completely conquered by Assyria and the people of Israel were taken from their land and scattered throughout the Assyrian Empire.

2. (Amo_3:13-15) Judgment on wicked places.

"Hear and testify against the house of Jacob," says the Lord GOD, the God of hosts, "That in the day I punish Israel for their transgressions, I will also visit destruction on the altars of Bethel; and the horns of the altar shall be cut off and fall to the ground.

I will destroy the winter house along with the summer house; the houses of ivory shall perish, and the great houses shall have an end," says the LORD.

a. **I will also visit destruction on the altars of Bethel; and the horns of the altar shall be cut off and fall to the ground:** The altars of dedication to idols would be destroyed by God's judgment. When we build a place of idolatry, we invite God to destroy it. The **horns of the altar**

at each corner and were thought to represent the “strength” of the altar, just as horns represent the “strength” of an animal.

b. The great houses shall have an end: God’s judgment would not stop at places of idol worship; it would also extend to places built and enjoyed through oppression and robbery.

i. In the age prior to Jeroboam II, the houses in Israel’s cities were roughly the same size. But archaeologists find a change starting in the eighth century B.C. - ancient cities like Tirzah have a neighborhood of large, expensive houses and another neighborhood of small, crowded structures, smaller than the houses from previous years. The larger houses are filled with the marks of prosperity, and the oppressive rich of Israel thought they could find safety there - but God’s judgment came against those houses as well, just as Amos promised.

(Amo 3:2) "I have chosen³ you alone from all the clans of the earth. Therefore I will punish you for all your sins."

(Amo 3:3) Do two walk together without having met?⁴

(Amo 3:4) Does a lion roar in the woods if he has not cornered his prey?⁵

Does a young lion bellow from his den if he has not caught something?

(Amo 3:5) Does a bird swoop down into a trap on the ground if there is no bait?

Does a trap spring up from the ground unless it has surely caught something?

(Amo 3:6) If an alarm sounds⁶ in a city, do people not fear?⁷

If disaster overtakes a⁸ city, is the LORD not responsible?⁹

(Amo 3:7) Certainly the sovereign LORD does nothing without first revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.

(Amo 3:8) A lion has roared!¹⁰ Who is not afraid?

The sovereign LORD has spoken! Who can refuse to prophesy?¹¹

(Amo 3:9) ***Samaria Will Fall***

Make this announcement in¹² the fortresses of Ashdod
and in the fortresses in the land of Egypt.

Say this:

"Gather on the hills around Samaria!¹³

Observe the many acts of violence¹⁴ taking place within the
city,¹⁵

the oppressive deeds¹⁶ occurring in it."¹⁷

(Amo 3:10) "They do not know how to do what is right." (The LORD is speaking.)

"They store up¹⁸ the spoils of destructive violence¹⁹ in
their fortresses.

(Amo 3:11) Therefore," says the sovereign LORD, "an enemy
will encircle the land.²⁰

He will take away your power;²¹

your fortresses will be looted."

(Amo 3:12) This is what the LORD says:

"Just as a shepherd salvages from the lion's mouth a couple
of leg bones or a piece of an ear,

so the Israelites who live in Samaria will be salvaged.²²

They will be left with just a corner of a bed,²³

and a part²⁴ of a couch."

(Amo 3:13) Listen and warn²⁵ the family²⁶ of Jacob!²⁷

The sovereign LORD, the God who commands armies,²⁸ is speaking!

(Amo 3:14) "Certainly when²⁹ I punish Israel for their³⁰ covenant transgressions,³¹

I will destroy³² Bethel's³³ altars.

The horns³⁴ of the altar will be cut off and fall to the ground.

(Amo 3:15) I will destroy both the winter and summer houses.³⁵

The houses filled with ivory³⁶ will be ruined,

the great³⁷ houses will be swept away."³⁸

The LORD is speaking!

(Amo 4:1) Listen to this message, you cows of Bashan¹ who live on Mount Samaria!

You² oppress the poor;

you crush the needy.

You say to your³ husbands,

"Bring us more to drink!"⁴
(Guzik)

Amo 4:1-13

AMOS 4 - "YET YOU HAVE NOT RETURNED TO ME"

A. The sinful women of Israel.

1. (Amo_4:1) Amos describes the indulgent women of Israel. Hear this word, you cows of Bashan, who are on the mountain of Samaria, who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, who say to your husbands, "Bring wine, let us drink!"

a. **You cows of Bashan:** Amos wasn't trained as a prophet, he was a simple herdsman and farmer. When he wanted to get the point across to the indulgent women of Israel, he called them *fat cows*. The livestock of **Bashan** - in the northern part of Israel, the modern-day Golan Heights - was known for being fat and healthy.

i. Psa_22:12 mentions the *strong bulls of Bashan*; Eze_39:18 mentions the large livestock, the *fatlings of Bashan*.

It's no exaggeration to say that Amos calls these women "fat cows." Though it is true that the very skinny ideal of female beauty is a modern phenomenon and especially in ancient times plumpness was a valued sign of affluence, we can count on it that at no time in human history has a woman appreciated being called a *fat cow*.

ii. "The sarcastic epithet *cows of Bashan* seems to refer both to the luxury that the wealthy women enjoyed and to a certain voluptuousness and sensuality which their extravagant life-style afforded them." (Hubbard) iii. "The prophet here represents the iniquitous, opulent, idle, lazy drones, whether men or women, under the idea of fatted bullocks, which were shortly to be led out to the slaughter." (Clarke)

b. **Who oppress the poor, who crush the needy:** It wasn't that these women were plump and affluent, it was that they gained their wealth and affluence by oppressing and crushing the less fortunate. God saw this and promised to hold them to account.

i. "These women may not have been directly involved in mistreating the poor. But their incessant demands for luxuries drove their husbands to greater injustices." (McComiskey)

ii. "David complains of the strong bulls of Bashan (Psa_22:12), but those he might better deal with than these cursed cows of Bashan." (Trapp)

c. **Who say to your husbands, "Bring wine, let us drink!"** It wasn't that these women were plump and affluent, it was that they used their affluence in the pure, self-focused pursuit of pleasure. God saw this and promised to hold them to account.

2. (Amo_4:2-3) God's promise of judgment against the women of Israel.

The Lord GOD has sworn by His holiness: "Behold, the days shall come upon you when He will take you away with fishhooks, and your posterity with fishhooks. You will go out through broken walls, each one straight ahead of her, and you will be cast into Harmon," Says the LORD.

a. **The Lord GOD has sworn by His holiness:** This is an exceedingly solemn and sure oath. "When he swore by his holiness in Amo_4:2, he guaranteed that the judgment would become a reality, because the holy God does not lie, nor can his holiness allow sin to go unpunished." (McComiskey)

b. **He will take you away with fishhooks:** God tells unrepentant Israel of their coming agony when they are conquered and exiled by the Assyrians. When the Assyrians depopulated and exiled a conquered community, they led the captives away on journeys of hundreds of miles, with the captives naked and attached together with a system of

strings and fishhooks pierced through their lower lip. God would make sure they were led in this humiliating manner **through** the **broken walls** of their conquered cities. This would thoroughly humble the *fat cows* of Israel.

B. God's answer to Israel's vain sacrifices.

1. (Amo_4:4-5) The vain sacrifices of Israel.

"Come to Bethel and transgress, at Gilgal multiply transgression; bring your sacrifices every morning, your tithes every three days.

Offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven, proclaim and announce the freewill offerings; for this you love, you children of Israel!" says the Lord GOD.

a. **Come to Bethel and transgress:** Because the kings of Israel did not want their people to go to the southern kingdom of Judah and sacrifice at Jerusalem, they set up rival centers of worship in cities like **Bethel** and **Gilgal**. The offered sacrifices - supposedly to the Lord - at these places, but because the offering wasn't made in obedience to God, it was only a **transgression**.

i. **Your tithes every three days:** There was a tithe that was to be brought every three years (Deu_14:28). Amos says, even if you were to bring **your tithes every three days** it would not matter, because it is all just outward show.

b. **Offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven:** Only one offering in Israel included **leaven**, the wave offering made on the Day of Pentecost. Here the prophet either refers to this one offering, or to mock their corrupt sacrifices, he suggests they bring an offering polluted by **leaven**.

c. **For this you love:** The children of Israel *loved* their corrupted worship. It was disobedient both in heart and action, but they *loved* it. It's always wrong to measure worship by how it pleases *us*, because it is possible for corrupt and disobedient worship to be "wonderfully" pleasing.

i. Of course, we don't want to get into the thinking that worship must "hurt" or be "dour" to be holy and acceptable.

That isn't the point. The point is that we don't *first* measure worship by how it makes us feel, we measure it by how it honors God.

2. (Amo_4:6-8) God withholds rain from idolatrous Israel.

"Also I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities. And lack of bread in all your places; yet you have not returned to Me," Says the LORD. "I also withheld rain from you, when there were still three months to the harvest. I made it rain on one city, I withheld rain from another city. One part was rained upon, and where it did not rain the part withered. So two or three cities wandered to another city to drink water, but they were not satisfied; yet you have not returned to Me," says the LORD."

a. **I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities:**

Because Israel seems have enjoyed financial prosperity when Amos preached, this is probably set in the "prophetic present" - future events spoken of in the present tense. God will so humble prosperous Israel that their clean teeth won't be made "dirty" by food, because there will be no food to eat in the drought God will send.

b. **I made it rain on one city, I withheld rain from another city:** God made the provision of rain so specific, they would know it was from His hand. Yet the message did not get through to them.

i. "To prove to them that this rain did not come *fortuitously* or of *necessity*, God was pleased to make these *most evident distinctions*. One city had rain, and could fill all its tanks or cisterns, while a neighbouring city had none . . .

in these instances a *particular providence* was most evident." (Clarke)

c. **Yet you have not returned to Me:** This is the greatest tragedy. Anyone can stumble into sin and feel the correcting hand of God, but we are in far greater trouble when we feel God's correction and still will not return to Him.

3. (Amo_4:9-11) Further judgment on idolatrous Israel.

"I blasted you with blight and mildew. When your gardens increased, your vineyards, your fig trees, and your olive trees, the locust devoured them; yet you have not returned to Me," says the LORD. "I sent among you a plague after the manner of Egypt; your young men I killed with a sword, along with your captive horses; I made the stench of your camps come up into your nostrils; yet you have not returned to Me," says the LORD. "I overthrew some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and you were like a firebrand plucked from the burning; yet you have not returned to Me," says the LORD.

a. **I blasted you . . . the locust devoured . . . I sent among you a plague . . . I made the stench of your camps come up:** Because Israel would not listen to the chastisement of the Lord, His hand grew more and more heavy upon them.

i. This wasn't a demonstration of God's anger, but of His *love*. He starts His chastisement slow and increases it incrementally, so that He can use the smallest amount of discipline necessary to turn our hearts back to Him. If we will not turn back the hand of chastisement grows heavier and heavier, out of loving desire to see our repentance.

ii. "*Blight* is the work of the east wind that dries and scorches the grain prematurely so that it turns brown. *Mildew* is the product of parasitic worms which turn pale the tips of green grain." (Hubbard)

b. **You were like a firebrand plucked from the burning; yet you have not returned to Me:** God sees Israel as a glowing ember **plucked** from the fires of judgment, like the same judgment that consumed Sodom and Gomorrah. Even though God spared them, they did not respond in gratitude - they **have not returned to God**.

4. (Amo_4:12-13) God vows to perform what He has promised.

"Therefore thus will I do to you, O Israel; because I will do this to you, prepare to meet your God, O Israel!" For behold,

He who forms mountains, and creates the wind, who declares to man what his thought is, and makes the morning darkness, who treads the high places of the earth; the LORD God of hosts is His name.

a. **Prepare to meet your God:** This is a sober warning, appropriate for all men at all times, because we never know when we will **meet our God** in eternity. Because we don't know when, we must always be prepared **to meet** our God - but this is *especially* true for those facing the judgment of God.

i. We can apply this text in three ways:

Prepare to meet your God as a *challenge*

Prepare to meet your God as an *invitation*

Prepare to meet your God as a *summons*

ii. As a *challenge*, God invites His enemies to **prepare to meet** Him. A boxer prepares long and hard before stepping into the ring against a champion. If you are going to step into the ring with God, you had better prepare!

"The prophet may be understood as in irony challenging the proud rebels to meet in arms the God whom they have despised. Let them prepare to fight it out with him whom they have made to be their enemy, and against whose laws they have so continually revolted." (Spurgeon)

iii. As an *invitation*, this is a blessing. The summons, "**Prepare to meet your God**" was nothing but a *blessing* to Adam. Ever since the fall it is our nature to hide from God, so the call "**Prepare to meet your God**" has a different

sense entirely. Still, if we will come to God we must **prepare** ourselves.

iv. As a *summons*, we recognize that one day all will stand before God and give account. "Think awhile upon who it is that you have to meet! You must meet, your God - your God! That is, offended justice you must meet whose laws you have broken, whose penalties you have ridiculed; justice righteously indignant with its sword drawn you must confront. You must meet your God; that is, you must be examined, by unblinded omniscience. He who has seen your heart, and read your thoughts, and jotted down your affections, and remembered your idle words, you must meet him; and infinite discernment you must meet; those eyes that never yet were duped; the God who will see through the veils of hypocrisy and all the concealments of formality. There will be no making yourself out to be better than you are before him." (Spurgeon)

b. **The LORD God of hosts is His name:** God emphasizes the point by emphasizing Whom makes the point, a God we should never trifle with.

- He is the God of all creation (**He who forms mountains, and creates the wind**)

- He is the God who is absolutely sovereign over man (**who declares to man what his thought is**)
- He is the God with all power over nature (**and makes the morning darkness**)

- He is the God who rules above all (**who treads the high places of the earth**)

(Amo 4:2) The sovereign LORD confirms this oath by his own holy character:5

"Certainly the time is approaching6

when you will be carried away7 in baskets,8

every last one of you9 in fishermen's pots.10

(Amo 4:3) Each of you will go straight through the gaps in the walls;¹¹

you will be thrown out¹² toward Harmon."¹³

The LORD is speaking!

(Amo 4:4) ***Israel has an Appointment with God***

"Go to Bethel¹⁴ and rebel!¹⁵

At Gilgal¹⁶ rebel some more!

Bring your sacrifices in¹⁷ the morning,

your tithes on¹⁸ the third day!

(Amo 4:5) Burn a thank offering of bread made with yeast!¹⁹

Make a public display of your voluntary offerings!²⁰

For you love to do this, you Israelites."

The sovereign LORD is speaking!

(Amo 4:6) "But surely I gave²¹ you no food to eat in any of your cities;

you lacked food everywhere you live.²²

Still you did not come back to me."

The LORD is speaking!

(Amo 4:7) "I withheld rain from you three months before the harvest.²³

I gave rain to one city, but not to another.

One field²⁴ would get rain, but the field that received no rain dried up.

(Amo 4:8) People from²⁵ two or three cities staggered into one city to get²⁶ water,

but remained thirsty.²⁷

Still you did not come back to me."

The LORD is speaking!

(Amo 4:9) "I destroyed your crops²⁸ with blight and disease.

Locusts kept²⁹ devouring your orchards,³⁰ vineyards, fig trees, and olive trees.

Still you did not come back to me."

The LORD is speaking!

(Amo 4:10) "I sent against you a plague like one of the Egyptian plagues.³¹

I killed your young men with the sword,

along with the horses you had captured.

I made the stench from the corpses³² rise up into your nostrils.

Still you did not come back to me."

The LORD is speaking!

(Amo 4:11) "I overthrew some of you the way God³³ overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.³⁴

You were like a burning stick³⁵ snatched from the flames.

Still you did not come back to me."

The LORD is speaking!

(Amo 4:12) "Therefore this is what I will do to you, Israel.

Because I will do this to you,

prepare to meet your God, Israel!³⁶

(Amo 4:13) For here he is!

He³⁷ formed the mountains and created the wind.

He reveals³⁸ his plans³⁹ to men.

He turns the dawn into darkness⁴⁰

and marches on the heights of the earth.

The LORD, the God who commands armies,⁴¹ is his name!"
(Amo 5:1) ***Death is Imminent***

Listen to this funeral song I am ready to sing about you,¹
family² of Israel:

(Guzik)

Amo 5:1-27

AMOS 5 - THE OFFERINGS GOD HATES

A. Seek the LORD in a time of impending judgment.

1. (Amo_5:1-3) Coming exile and captivity.

Hear this word which I take up against you, a lamentation, O house of Israel: the virgin of Israel has fallen; she will rise no more.

She lies forsaken on her land; there is no one to raise her up. For thus says the Lord GOD: "The city that goes out by a thousand shall have a hundred left, and that which goes out by a hundred shall have ten left to the house of Israel."

a. **The virgin of Israel has fallen:** Amos sees Israel as a tragic young woman who is **fallen** and **forsaken**, no one coming to her aid. In rebelling against God, Israel is as helpless as a young woman among violent men.

i. **Virgin** "depicts the vulnerability of Israel and the special sadness that accompanies her death, as though she should have had a whole life of live and fruitfulness before her."
(Hubbard)

b. **The city that goes out by a thousand shall have a hundred left:** Amos predicts that things will be so bad for Israel that when the enemy comes, a city that would have before sent out **a thousand** soldiers will now only send out

a hundred. “Only a handful of ragged, war-weary men will be left of Israel’s proud army.” (McComiskey) 2. (Amo_5:4-9)
An invitation to seek the LORD.

For thus says the LORD to the house of Israel: “Seek Me and live; but do not seek Bethel, nor enter Gilgal, nor pass over to Beersheba; for Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, and Bethel shall come to nothing. Seek the LORD and live, lest He break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and devour it, with no one to quench it in Bethel; you who turn justice to wormwood, and lay righteousness to rest in the earth!” He made the Pleiades and Orion; He turns the shadow of death into morning and makes the day dark as night; He calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out on the face of the earth; the LORD is His name. He rains ruin upon the strong, so that fury comes upon the fortress.

a. **Seek Me and live:** When Israel was ripe for judgment, the key to survival was to simply **seek** the LORD. However, we can’t **seek** the Lord unless we **do not seek** places of disobedience and self-will (exemplified by **Bethel** and **Gilgal** and other rival centers of worship).

i. **Bethel, Gilgal, and Beersheba** were once places associated with great privilege and spiritual heritage. **Bethel** was the place where God met Jacob (Gen_28:11-19, Gen_35:1-7). **Gilgal** was the place where Israel’s spiritual reproach was rolled away in the days of Joshua (Jos_5:1-12). **Beersheba** was connected to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Gen_21:22-33; Gen_26:23-33; Gen_46:1-5). Now these were places of *vain, empty worship*.

ii. There is a play on words in the phrase **for Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, and Bethel shall come to nothing**. It doesn’t come across in the English translation, but in Hebrew it is a clever pun.

b. **You who turn justice to wormwood, and lay righteousness to rest:** Amos again confronts the corrupt legal system of Israel. **Justice** had been thoroughly spoiled, and **righteousness** was as good as dead.

c. **He made the Pleiades and Orion:** Amos explains *why* God is worthy to be sought, and *why* He can deliver Israel from their coming doom. He can do it because He is the God mighty and wise enough to make and uphold the starry constellations in the sky, and to “manage” the creation.

i. This means that God is strong enough to save, but also plenty strong enough to bring judgment (**He rains ruin upon the strong, so that fury comes upon the fortress**). If the **strong** and the **fortress** can't stand before God's power, no one can.

3. (Amo_5:10-15) The cause, the curse, and the cure.

They hate the one who rebukes in the gate, and they abhor the one who speaks uprightly. Therefore, because you tread down the poor and take grain taxes from him, though you have built houses of hewn stone, yet you shall not dwell in them; you have planted pleasant vineyards, but you shall not drink wine from them. For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: Afflicting the just and taking bribes; diverting the poor from justice at the gate. Therefore the prudent keep silent at that time, for it is an evil time. Seek good and not evil, that you may live; so the LORD God of hosts will be with you, as you have spoken. Hate evil, love good; establish justice in the gate. It may be that the LORD God of hosts will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

a. **They hate the one who rebukes in the gate:** Amos tells us the *cause* of coming judgment - the terrible way that the people of Israel treat one another, especially how the strong take advantage of the weak. The weak has no voice **in the gate**, is robbed by oppressive **taxes**. The rich take advantage with **bribes** and pay off the system to drive **the poor from justice**.

i. The **gate** was the law-court in ancient cities. Israel's courts were so corrupt that they silenced the poor and righteous. The effect of this culture of injustice was that **the prudent keep silent at that time, for it is an evil time** - godly

and righteous people did not speak out either fearing retribution or knowing it would do no good.

ii. “Judicial decisions for each community were taken at the gate of the city, where the heads of families and other elders assembled to hear witnesses, arbitrate disputes, decide controversies and generally dispense justice. The space on the inner side of the gate together with rooms or alcoves in the gate area itself were used as courtrooms.”

(Hubbard)

b. **Though you have built houses of hewn stone, yet you shall not dwell in them:** Amos tells us God’s *curse* for Israel’s wickedness. Though the wicked in Israel gained fancy **houses** and **vineyards** from their oppression of the poor and railroading of justice, the gains were only temporary. God will evict them from their dishonestly gained **houses** and **vineyards**.

c. **Seek good and not evil, that you may live; so the LORD God of hosts will be with you:** Amos proclaims God’s *cure* for Israel’s sin. They must begin to simply **seek good and not evil**. They must transform their corrupt courts and **establish justice in the gates**.

B. Wailing and woe upon Israel.

1. (Amo_5:16-20) Wailing and woe in the day of the LORD.

Therefore the LORD God of hosts, the Lord, says this: “There shall be wailing in all streets, and they shall say in all the highways, ‘Alas! Alas!’ They shall call the farmer to mourning, and skillful lamenters to wailing. In all vineyards there shall be wailing, for I will pass through you,” says the LORD. Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD! For what good is the day of the LORD to you?

It will be darkness, and not light. It will be as though a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him! Or as though he went into the house, leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him! Is not the day of the LORD darkness, and not light? Is it not very dark, with no brightness in it?

a. **They shall call the farmer to mourning, and skillful lamenters to wailing:** This refers to the Jewish practice of hiring professional mourners to wail at a funeral. Amos describes judgment so widespread that there was a shortage of **skillful lamenters**, so they had to hire **the farmer to mourning**.

i. Because the Prophet Amos as a farmer, he often relates the judgments of God to how they affect the farmers of Israel.

b. **For what good is the day of the LORD to you? It will be darkness, and not light:** In their religious ritualism, the people of Israel still claimed they longed for **the day of the LORD**. Amos rightly warns them that they don't know what they are asking for because **the day of the LORD** will bring them judgment, not mercy. They will end up worse off than before, it **will be as though a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him!**

i. "The illustrative parable makes it clear that darkness and light do not speak here of wickedness and righteousness but of disaster and safety." (Hubbard)

2. (Amo_5:21-27) Israel's religious ceremonies will not save them from the wailing and woe to come.

"I hate, I despise your feast days, and I do not savor your sacred assemblies. Though you offer Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them, nor will I regard your fattened peace offerings. Take away from Me the noise of your songs, for I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments. But let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream.

Did you offer Me sacrifices and offerings In the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? You also carried Sikkuth your king and Chiun, your idols, the star of your gods, which you made for yourselves. Therefore I will send you into captivity beyond Damascus," says the LORD, whose name is the God of hosts.

a. **I hate, I despise your feast days:** This would have amazed - and offended - those in Israel who heard Amos say

this.

They told themselves that they were really honoring God and pleasing Him by their observance of the **feasts** and **sacred assemblies**, but God was offended by their religious ceremonialism, disconnected from the heart and justice towards one another.

i. Amos expresses the same idea Jesus did in Mat_5:23-24 : *Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way.*

First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Israel thought their **feast days**, their **sacred assemblies**, their **burnt offerings**, their **grain offerings**, their **peace offerings**, and their **songs** were nothing as long as there was no **justice** or **righteousness** in their dealings with others.

b. **Let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream:** It is easy to separate our religious ceremonies from the way we treat others, and to think that God should be happy if we give Him “His due” without regard to **justice** and **righteousness** towards others. God won’t have it. He says, “Keep your annoying religious ceremonies, and **let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream.**”

i. “A momentary flow of justice and righteousness will not do; these virtues are to keep on in the social order like a stream that does not dry up with summer heat.” (McComiskey)

c. **You also carried Sikkuth your king and Chiun, your idols, the star of your gods, which you made for yourselves:** Apparently, these were pagan deities Israel brought with them from Egypt into the Promised Land. God reminds Israel that though they sacrificed to Him in the wilderness, they also hung on to their idolatry. It didn’t please Him then and it doesn’t please Him now.

i. The NIV translates **Sikkuth** and **Chiun** as *shrine* and *pedestal*. It's simply a difficult passage to translate. The Septuagint has *Moloch* for **Sikkuth** and *Rephan* (an Egyptian deity related to the planet Saturn) for **Chiun**.

d. **Therefore I will send you into captivity**: Israel's extreme sin merited an extreme correction, nothing less than exile and **captivity**.

(Amo 5:2) "The virgin³ Israel has fallen down and will not get up again.

She is abandoned on her own land

with no one to help her get up."⁴

(Amo 5:3) The sovereign LORD says this:

"The city that marches out with a thousand soldiers⁵ will have only a hundred left;

the town⁶ that marches out with a hundred soldiers⁷ will have only ten left for the family of Israel."⁸

(Amo 5:4) The LORD says this to the family⁹ of Israel:

"Seek me¹⁰ so you can live!

(Amo 5:5) Do not seek Bethel!¹¹

Do not visit Gilgal!

Do not journey down¹² to Beer Sheba!

For the people of Gilgal¹³ will certainly be carried into exile;¹⁴

and Bethel will become a place where disaster abounds."¹⁵
(Amo 5:6) Seek the LORD so you can live!

Otherwise he will break out¹⁶ like fire against Joseph's¹⁷
family;¹⁸

the fire¹⁹ will consume

and no one will be able to quench it and save Bethel.²⁰
(Amo 5:7) The Israelites²¹ turn justice into bitterness;²²

they throw what is fair and right²³ to the ground.²⁴
(Amo 5:8) (But there is one who made the constellations
Pleiades and Orion;

he can turn the darkness into morning

and daylight²⁵ into night.

He summons the water of the seas

and pours it out on the earth's surface.

The LORD is his name!

(Amo 5:9) He flashes²⁶ destruction down upon the strong

so that destruction overwhelms²⁷ the fortified places.)

(Amo 5:10) The Israelites²⁸ hate anyone who arbitrates at
the city gate;²⁹

they despise anyone who speaks honestly.

(Amo 5:11) Therefore, because you make the poor pay taxes
on their crops³⁰

and exact a grain tax from them,

you will not live in the houses you built with chiseled stone,

nor will you drink the wine from the fine³¹ vineyards you planted.³²

(Amo 5:12) Certainly³³ I am aware of³⁴ your many rebellious acts³⁵

and your numerous sins.

You³⁶ torment the innocent, you take bribes,

and you deny justice to³⁷ the needy at the city gate.³⁸

(Amo 5:13) For this reason whoever is smart³⁹ keeps quiet⁴⁰ in such a time,

for it is an evil⁴¹ time.

(Amo 5:14) Seek good and not evil so you can live!

Then the LORD, the God who commands armies, just might be with you,

as you claim he is.

(Amo 5:15) Hate what is wrong, love what is right!

Promote⁴² justice at the city gate!⁴³

Maybe the LORD, the God who commands armies, will have mercy on⁴⁴ those who are left from⁴⁵ Joseph.⁴⁶

(Amo 5:16) Because of Israel's sins⁴⁷ this is what the LORD, the God who commands armies, the sovereign One,⁴⁸ says: "In all the squares there will be wailing,

in all the streets they will mourn the dead.⁴⁹

They will tell the field workers⁵⁰ to lament

and the professional mourners⁵¹ to wail.

(Amo 5:17) In all the vineyards there will be wailing,

for I will pass through⁵² your midst," says the LORD.

(Amo 5:18) ***The Lord Demands Justice***

Woe⁵³ to those who wish for the day of the LORD!

Why do you want the LORD's day of judgment to come?

It will bring darkness, not light.

(Amo 5:19) Disaster will be inescapable,⁵⁴

as if a man ran from a lion only to meet a bear,

then escaped⁵⁵ into a house,

leaned his hand against the wall,

and was bitten by a poisonous snake.

(Amo 5:20) Don't you realize the LORD's day of judgment will bring⁵⁶ darkness, not light —

gloomy blackness, not bright light?

(Amo 5:21) "I absolutely despise⁵⁷ your festivals!

I get no pleasure⁵⁸ from your religious assemblies!

(Amo 5:22) Even if you offer me burnt and grain offerings,⁵⁹ I will not be satisfied;

I will not look with favor on your peace offerings of fattened calves.⁶⁰

(Amo 5:23) Take away from me your⁶¹ noisy songs;

I don't want to hear the music of your stringed instruments.⁶²

(Amo 5:24) Justice must flow like torrents of water,

righteous actions⁶³ like a stream that never dries up.

(Amo 5:25) You did not bring me⁶⁴ sacrifices and grain offerings during the forty years you spent in the wilderness, family⁶⁵ of Israel.

(Amo 5:26) You will pick up your images⁶⁶ of Sikkuth,⁶⁷ your king,⁶⁸

and Kiyyun,⁶⁹ your star god, which you made for yourselves,

(Amo 5:27) and I will drive you into exile beyond Damascus," says the LORD.

He is called the God who commands armies!
(Amo 6:1) ***The Party is over for the Rich***

Woe¹ to those who live in ease in Zion,²

to those who feel secure on Mount Samaria.

They think of themselves as³ the elite class of the best nation.

The family⁴ of Israel looks to them for leadership.⁵
(Guzik)

Amo 6:1-14

AMOS 6 - WOE TO THE PRIDE OF JACOB

A. Woe to those who are at ease in Zion.

1. (Amo_6:1-2) Comparing Israel to her pagan neighbors.

Woe to you who are at ease in Zion, and trust in Mount Samaria, notable persons in the chief nation, to whom the house of Israel comes! Go over to Calneh and see; and from there go to Hamath the great; then go down to Gath of the Philistines. Are you better than these kingdoms? Or is their territory greater than your territory?

a. **Woe to you who are at ease in Zion:** In her pride and indulgence, all Israel sought was **ease**. This indulgent lust for comfort and luxury is a sin, and God will judge Israel for it.

i. The idea of rest isn't all bad. Jesus wants to give us rest (Mat_11:28-29). There is a rest waiting for the people of God (Heb_4:9-11). There is rest for us in heaven (Rev_4:9-11). Then there is another kind of rest, a sinful kind of rest - connected to indifference, laziness, and indulgence.

ii. Yet the prophet Amos speaks of "a carnal ease, a fleshly security, it is not the confidence of a man who is pardoned, but the ease of a hardened wretch who has learned to

despise the gibbet. It is not the assurance of one who is on the rock, but the ease of a senseless drunkard, whose house is tottering from its sandy foundations, and yet he riots at full speed; it is not the calm of soul at peace with God, but the ease of a madman, who, because he has hidden his sin from his own eyes, thinks he has concealed it from God. It is the ease and peace of one who has grown callous, hardened, brutalized, stupid, sullen, and careless, who has begun a sleep which God grant may soon be broken, or else it will surely bring him where he shall make his bed in hell.” (Spurgeon)

iii. How did this sinful **ease** of God’s people show itself?

- Israel’s sinful ease was shown in *presumption*, because she trusted in the might of Mount Samaria
- Israel’s sinful ease was shown in *procrastination*, because she *put far off the day of doom*
- Israel’s sinful ease was shown in *cruelty to men*, because she caused *the seat of violence to come near*
- Israel’s sinful ease was shown in *love of self*, through all the self-indulgence described in Amo_6:4-6
- Israel’s sinful ease was shown in *carelessness*, in the willful, drunken ignorance of Amo_6:6

iv. “Self-indulgence! Oh, this is the God of many! They live not for Christ - What do they for him? They live not for his Church - What care they for that? They live for self, and for self only. And mark there are such among the poor as well as among the rich, for all classes have this evil leaven.” (Spurgeon)

v. King David had an ungodly ease when he stayed behind when it was time for kings to go out to war - and he slipped into sin with Bathsheba, eventually murdering her husband to cover up his immorality (2 Samuel 11).

b. **Are you better than these kingdoms?** God wants to rebuke the pride of Israel by making them compare themselves to some of their pagan neighbors. Perhaps they aren’t so great after all. Perhaps these cities already suffered

the judgment of God, and God wanted Israel to know they would be next because they were no better.

2. (Amo_6:3-7) The high-standing in Israel will be brought low.

Woe to you who put far off the day of doom, who cause the seat of violence to come near; who lie on beds of ivory, stretch out on your couches, eat lambs from the flock and calves from the midst of the stall; who sing idly to the sound of stringed instruments, and invent for yourselves musical instruments like David; who drink wine from bowls, and anoint yourselves with the best ointments, but are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph. Therefore they shall now go captive as the first of the captives, and those who recline at banquets shall be removed.

a. **Woe to you who put far off the day of doom . . . who sing idly to the sound of stringed instruments . .**

.

who drink wine from bowls . . . but are not grieved:

Amos prophesied during a time of economic prosperity in Israel, and the successful in Israel used that prosperity for pure self-indulgence. When God makes us prosperous, we have an absolute obligation to use what He gives us in a way that glorifies Him, not pampers our selves.

b. **Therefore they shall now go captive as first of the captives:** God warns the leading men of Israel that they will lead in the train of **captives** when the Assyrians conquer Israel.

B. The coming destruction of Israel.

1. (Amo_6:8-11) The city delivered to destruction.

The Lord GOD has sworn by Himself, the LORD God of hosts says: "I abhor the pride of Jacob, and hate his palaces; therefore I will deliver up the city and all that is in it." Then it shall come to pass, that if ten men remain in one house, they shall die. And when a relative of the dead, with one who will burn the bodies, picks up the bodies to take them out of the house, he will say to one inside the house, "Are

there any more with you?" Then someone will say, "None." And he will say, "Hold your tongue! For we dare not mention the name of the LORD." For behold, the LORD gives a command: He will break the great house into bits, and the little house into pieces.

a. **I abhor the pride of Jacob:** As much as their sinful conduct, God hated the **pride of Jacob**. In their season of prosperity and success they lifted their hearts high in pride, and God will send a destroying army to bring them low.

i. This principle is so important to the Lord that He repeats it three times: *God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.* (1Pe_5:5, Jam_4:6, Pro_3:34)

b. **Hold your tongue! For we dare not mention the name of the LORD:** "When a relative of one of the dead comes to burn the corpses, should he find one person still alive, that person will not permit his mentioning the name of the Lord for fear that the Lord will turn his wrath on him." (McComiskey) 2. (Amo_6:12-14) The injustice and pride of Israel make it a target of judgment.

Do horses run on rocks? Does one plow there with oxen? Yet you have turned justice into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood, you who rejoice over Lo Debar, who say, "Have we not taken Karnaim for ourselves by our own strength?" "But, behold, I will raise up a nation against you, O house of Israel," says the LORD God of hosts; "And they will afflict you from the entrance of Hamath to the Valley of the Arabah."

a. **Do horses run on rocks?** You can't expect a good result if you run a horse over rough rocks, because you will wreck the horse. In the same way, Israel can't expect a good result when they turn **justice into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood.**

i. Here, Amos "puts together two proverbs which were commonly used to signify that men do not, as a rule, continue to labor in vain, and spend their strength for nought. Wise men do not send their horses to run upon the

rocks; and they do not send their oxen to plough where all their toil would be wasted: 'Shall horses run upon the rock?' 'Will one plough rocks with oxen?' The answer implied is, 'Certainly not,' and it meant that, if a thing cannot be done, it is not worth doing if it can, it will be well for us not to attempt to do it." (Spurgeon)

b. I will raise up a nation against you, O house of Israel: Amos comes back to this constant theme - because of Israel's great and deep sin, judgment is coming through a conquering nation.

i. "The Lord points to other cities which had been destroyed, - to Calneh, and Hamath, and Gath, which he had smitten because of the sin of the people who had lived there; and he says, 'Ye that dwell at Jerusalem, and ye that live at Samaria, do not imagine that ye will escape the consequences of your sin. I was able to reach the inhabitants of these proud cities, despite their strong fortifications and their powerful armies; and I can reach you also.' So, when we look back upon the judgments of God upon guilty men, we may conclude that no sinner has any right to think that he shall escape. The proudest and mightiest have been brought down by God and so will men, will dare to resist the Most High, continue to be humble, even to the world's end." (Spurgeon)

(Amo 6:2) They say to the people:6

"Journey over to Calneh and look at it!

Then go from there to Hamath-Rabbah!7

Then go down to Gath of the Philistines!

Are they superior to our two8 kingdoms?

Is their territory larger than yours?"⁹

(Amo 6:3) You refuse to believe a day of disaster will come,¹⁰

but you establish a reign of violence.¹¹

(Amo 6:4) They lie around on beds decorated with ivory,¹²

and sprawl out on their couches.

They eat lambs from the flock,

and calves from the middle of the pen.

(Amo 6:5) They sing¹³ to the tune of¹⁴ stringed instruments;¹⁵

like David they invent¹⁶ musical instruments.

(Amo 6:6) They drink wine from sacrificial bowls,¹⁷

and pour the very best oils on themselves.¹⁸

Yet they are not concerned over¹⁹ the ruin²⁰ of Joseph.

(Amo 6:7) Therefore they will now be the first to go into exile,²¹

and the religious banquets²² where they sprawl on couches²³ will end.

(Amo 6:8) The sovereign LORD confirms this oath by his very own life.²⁴

The LORD, the God who commands armies, is speaking:

"I despise Jacob's arrogance;

I hate their²⁵ fortresses.

I will hand over to their enemies²⁶ the city of Samaria²⁷ and everything in it."

(Amo 6:9) If ten men are left in one house, they too will die.

(Amo 6:10) When their close relatives, the ones who will burn the corpses,²⁸ pick up their bodies to remove the bones from the house, they will say to anyone who is in the inner rooms of the house, "Is anyone else with you?" He will respond, "Be quiet! Don't invoke the LORD's name!"²⁹

(Amo 6:11) Indeed, look! The LORD is giving the command.³⁰

He will smash the large house to bits,

and the small house into little pieces.

(Amo 6:12) Can horses run on rocky cliffs?

Can one plow the sea with oxen?³¹

Yet you have turned justice into a poisonous plant,

and the fruit of righteous actions into a bitter plant.³²

(Amo 6:13) You are happy because you conquered Lo-Debar.³³

You say, "Did we not conquer Karnaim³⁴ by our own power?"

(Amo 6:14) "Look! I am about to bring³⁵ a nation against you, family³⁶ of Israel."

The LORD, the God who commands armies, is speaking.

"They will oppress³⁷ you all the way from Lebo-Hamath³⁸ to the Stream of the Arabah."³⁹

(Amo 7:1) ***Symbolic Visions of Judgment***

The sovereign LORD showed me this: I saw¹ him making locusts just as the crops planted late² were beginning to sprout. (The crops planted late sprout after the royal harvest.³) (Guzik)

Amo 7:1-17

AMOS 7 - VISIONS OF JUDGMENT AND THE POWER OF THE PROPHET'S PRAYER

A. Judgment seen in three visions.

1. (Amo_7:1-3) The vision of locusts.

Thus the Lord GOD showed me: behold, He formed locust swarms at the beginning of the late crop; indeed it was the late crop after the king's mowings. And so it was, when they had finished eating the grass of the land, that I said: "O Lord GOD, forgive, I pray! Oh, that Jacob may stand, for he is small!" So the LORD relented concerning this. "It shall not be," said the LORD.

a. **Thus the Lord GOD showed me:** The prophet Amos will relate a vision from the LORD. This was something he *saw*, something the LORD **showed** him.

b. **He formed locust swarms at the beginning of the late crop:** Late in the harvest, Amos sees a swarm of locusts coming to devour the crops of Israel. It came **after the king's mowings**, so the royal court already took their taxes, so there is nothing left at all.

i. "If the first cutting went to the court and the second crop to the locusts, Israel would be left destitute indeed."

(Hubbard)

c. **Oh, that Jacob may stand, for he is small!** At this vision of terrible judgment, the prophet's heart is moved

with pity and compassion for Israel, and he asks God to consider Israel's frailty.

i. "Israel is called *Jacob*, a reminder that he was the smaller, younger one to Esau in Isaac's family; God had deliberately chosen him and therefore was obligated to stand by him in his helplessness." (Hubbard)

d. **So the LORD relented:** In response to the prophet's prayer, the **LORD relented**. Is it really that simple? What if Amos didn't pray or if he didn't pray with the same earnestness? We must believe that the LORD would *not* have **relented**.

i. This is another amazing example of how much rests upon prayer. We may debate endlessly how this incident reflects on the issues of predestination and human responsibility, but clearly we are left with the impression that the plague either came or was held back based on the prophet's prayer.

2. (Amo_7:4-6) The vision of fire.

Thus the Lord GOD showed me: behold, the Lord GOD called for conflict by fire, and it consumed the great deep and devoured the territory. Then I said: "O Lord GOD, cease, I pray! Oh, that Jacob may stand, for he is small!" So the LORD relented concerning this. "This also shall not be," said the Lord GOD.

a. **The Lord GOD called for conflict by fire:** After the vision of locusts, now Amos sees a vision of a great consuming fire upon the land of Israel. In response, he does what he did before: plead for mercy (**Oh, that Jacob may stand, for he is small!**).

b. **So the LORD relented concerning this:** As happened with the vision of locusts, God **relented** at the prayer of the prophet.

3. (Amo_7:7-9) The vision of the plumb line.

Thus He showed me: Behold, the Lord stood on a wall made with a plumb line, with a plumb line in His hand. And the LORD said to me, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A

plumb line.” Then the Lord said: “Behold, I am setting a plumb line in the midst of My people Israel; I will not pass by them anymore. The high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste. I will rise with the sword against the house of Jeroboam.”

a. **I am setting a plumb line in the midst of My people Israel:** A **plumb line** measures if a wall is built straight.

God holds this measure against Israel, to see if they are “straight” against His standard.

b. **The high places of Isaac shall be desolate:** “The references to *Isaac* are the only places in the Old Testament where *Isaac* stands for the nation of his descendants rather than for the patriarch himself. Amos seems to have in mind the special veneration for Isaac which the members of the Northern Kingdom displayed . . . Amos may be announcing and lamenting the tragic break with the covenantal past.” (Hubbard)

c. **I will rise with the sword against the house of Jeroboam:** Because Israel is chronically “crooked” against the **plumb line** of God, Israel and her leadership shall be judged **with the sword**.

B. Hearing from all sides.

1. (Amo_7:10-13) Amaziah’s words against Amos.

Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, “Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel. The land is not able to bear all his words. For thus Amos has said: ‘Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive from their own land.’” Then Amaziah said to Amos: “Go, you seer! Flee to the land of Judah. There eat bread, and there prophesy. But never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king’s sanctuary, and it is the royal residence.”

a. **Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel:** This **Amaziah** was a wicked man, because he is identified as a **priest of Bethel**, which was one of the centers of Israel’s idolatrous worship. He sent

a message of **Jeroboam king of Israel**, who was a successful king by worldly standards, but a wicked king before God.

b. **Saying, “Amos has conspired against you”** : Amaziah implicated the prophet in a conspiracy to undermine King Jeroboam and the people of Israel. He also said that the message of Amos was too hard (**the land is not able to bear all his words**).

c. **Flee to the land of Judah. There eat bread, and there prophesy**: Amaziah was offended that Amos came Bethel and prophesied, so he does his best to send him back to Judah.

i. “Hireling priests of this kind have ever been the great enemies of the true prophets of God; and when they could bring no charge of false doctrine or immorality against them, have accused them of conspiring against the government; and because they have preached against *sin*, have held them up as exciting insurrection among the people.” (Clarke)

2. (Amo_7:14-15) The answer from Amos.

Then Amos answered, and said to Amaziah: “I was no prophet, nor was I a son of a prophet, but I was a sheepbreeder and a tender of sycamore fruit. Then the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to My people Israel.’”

a. **I was no prophet, nor was I a son of a prophet**: Amos replies to Amaziah by noting that he was a reluctant, unprofessional prophet - only a farmer by trade. Amos was hardly the type to launch a conspiracy.

b. **Then the LORD took me as I followed the flock**: Like many others in the Bible, God called Amos as he faithfully performed his present calling. It was because Amos was an honorable **sheepbreeder and a tender of sycamore fruit** that God made him an honorable prophet.

i. We see also that God used Amos as a **sheepbreeder and a tender of sycamore fruit**. With so many allusions and

illustrations from the world of agriculture, Amos spoke as a farmer and God used it. "Every prophet has a manner and style peculiarly his own. Although God speaketh through them all, yet they lose not their individuality or originality of character. The breath which causes the music is the same, but no two of the instruments give forth precisely the same sound. It is true they all utter the words of God; but each voice has its own special cry, so that though God is pre-eminently seen, yet the man is not lost." (Spurgeon)

3. (Amo_7:16-17) The answer from the LORD.

Now therefore, hear the word of the LORD: "You say, 'Do not prophesy against Israel, and do not spout against the house of Isaac.' Therefore thus says the LORD: 'Your wife shall be a harlot in the city; your sons and daughters shall fall by the sword; your land shall be divided by survey line; you shall die in a defiled land; and Israel shall surely be led away captive from his own land.'"

a. **Your wife shall be a harlot in the city; your sons and daughters shall fall by the sword:** God's word to Amaziah - through the prophet Amos, no less - is that the calamity he wanted to silence Amos about would certainly come upon him.

b. **And Israel shall surely be led away captive from his own land:** This is exactly what Amaziah accused Amos of saying as part of the "conspiracy." Amos is bold enough to speak for the Lord, and to tell Amaziah and everyone else that Israel's impending captivity is indeed true. This was a difficult word in most difficult circumstances, but Amos was faithful to deliver it.

(Amo 7:2) When they had completely consumed the earth's vegetation, I said,

"Sovereign LORD, forgive Israel!4

How can Jacob survive?5

He is too weak!"⁶

(Amo 7:3) The LORD decided not to do this.⁷ "It will not happen," the LORD said.

(Amo 7:4) The sovereign LORD showed me this: I saw⁸ the sovereign LORD summoning a shower of fire.⁹ It consumed the great deep and devoured the fields.

(Amo 7:5) I said, "Sovereign LORD, stop!

How can Jacob survive?¹⁰

He is too weak!"¹¹

(Amo 7:6) The LORD decided not to do this.¹² The sovereign LORD said, "This will not happen either."

(Amo 7:7) He showed me this: I saw¹³ the sovereign One¹⁴ standing by a tin¹⁵ wall holding tin in his hand.

(Amo 7:8) The LORD said to me, "What do you see, Amos?" I said, "Tin." The sovereign One then said,

"Look, I am about to place tin among my people Israel.

I will no longer overlook their sin.¹⁶

(Amo 7:9) Isaac's centers of worship¹⁷ will become desolate;

Israel's holy places will be in ruins.

I will attack Jeroboam's dynasty with the sword."¹⁸

(Amo 7:10) ***Amos Confronts a Priest***

Amaziah the priest of Bethel¹⁹ sent this message²⁰ to King Jeroboam of Israel: "Amos is conspiring against you in the

very heart of the kingdom of Israel!²¹ The land cannot endure all his prophecies.²²

(Amo 7:11) As a matter of fact,²³ Amos is saying this: 'Jeroboam will die by the sword and Israel will certainly be carried into exile²⁴ away from its land.' "

(Amo 7:12) Amaziah then said to Amos, "Leave, you visionary!²⁵ Run away to the land of Judah! Earn your living²⁶ and prophesy there!

(Amo 7:13) Don't prophesy at Bethel²⁷ any longer, for a royal temple and palace are here!"²⁸

(Amo 7:14) Amos replied²⁹ to Amaziah, "I was not a prophet by profession.³⁰ No,³¹ I was a herdsman who also took care of³² sycamore fig trees.³³

(Amo 7:15) Then the LORD took me from tending³⁴ flocks and gave me this commission,³⁵ 'Go! Prophesy to my people Israel!'

(Amo 7:16) So now listen to the LORD's message! You say, 'Don't prophesy against Israel! Don't preach³⁶ against the family of Isaac!'

(Amo 7:17) "Therefore this is what the LORD says:

'Your wife will become a prostitute in the streets³⁷

and your sons and daughters will die violently.³⁸

Your land will be given to others³⁹

and you will die in a foreign⁴⁰ land.

Israel will certainly be carried into exile⁴¹ away from its land.' "

(Amo 8:1) ***More Visions and Messages of Judgment***

The sovereign LORD showed me this: I saw¹ a basket of summer fruit.²

(Guzik)

Amo 8:1-14

AMOS 8 - LIKE A BASKET OF RIPE FRUIT

A. Rotting and corruption in Israel.

1. (Amo_8:1-3) The basket of summer fruit.

Thus the Lord GOD showed me: behold, a basket of summer fruit. And He said, “Amos, what do you see?” So I said, “A basket of summer fruit.” Then the LORD said to me: “The end has come upon My people Israel; I will not pass by them anymore. And the songs of the temple shall be wailing in that day,” says the Lord GOD; “Many dead bodies everywhere, they shall be thrown out in silence.”

a. **A basket of summer fruit:** This was fruit that was *ripe*, and would not keep long. Just as the time is short for **summer fruit**, so the time is short for Israel.

i. In the original Hebrew, the prophet’s point is far more emphatic because he uses a play on words that difficult to communicate in English. “The overt connection between the vision and Israel’s fate was in the word-play based on the similar sounds [between **summer** and **end**] . . . The point of this vision, then, is the finality of judgment.”

(Hubbard)

ii. “So when Amos replies to the Lord that he sees a basket of ripe *qayis*, God replied “*Qes!* ” An end is to come upon Israel.” (Boice) b. **The end has come upon My people Israel . . . Many dead bodies everywhere, they shall be thrown out in silence:** Ripe fruit is close to being **thrown out**, and a similar judgment will come upon “rotten” Israel.

2. (Amo_8:4-6) Dishonesty and cheating the poor in Israel.

Hear this, you who swallow up the needy, and make the poor of the land fail, saying: “When will the New Moon be past, that we may sell grain? And the Sabbath, that we may trade wheat? Making the ephah small and the shekel large,

falsifying the scales by deceit, that we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals; even sell the bad wheat?"

a. **Who swallow up the needy, and make the poor of the land fail:** Amos returns to his familiar theme of social justice, decrying those in Israel who make their money from the unjust treatment of the poor and vulnerable.

b. **When will the New Moon be past, that we may sell grain?** Israel *kept* the **New Moon** and **Sabbath**, but only outwardly. Inside, they rejected these special days appointed by God and they couldn't wait until they were over.

c. **Making the ephah small and the shekel large:** There was chronic corruption and cheating in the business world, and God saw it and was angry. When they sold wheat (sometimes **bad wheat**), they used a **small** measure. When they bought or gave change, they used a **large** measure for the **shekel**.

i. Cheating and dishonesty in business is not a small sin, nor is it a sin excused of "necessity." God sees it and takes account.

B. How God will judge Israel.

1. (Amo_8:7-8) The certainty of judgment.

The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob: "Surely I will never forget any of their works. Shall the land not tremble for this, and everyone mourn who dwells in it? All of it shall swell like the River, heave and subside like the River of Egypt."

a. **Surely I will never forget any of their works:** This reminds us that *time* can never erase sin. We often feel that if we or if others forget the sins of our youth, then God must forget about them also, but that is not the case. Only the atoning work of Jesus can cover sin, not time.

i. We can make a contrast between Amo_8:7 and Heb_6:10 : *For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have*

ministered to the saints, and do minister. God does not forget the *good* works of His people, and He does not forget the *evil* works of those who reject Him.

b. **All of it shall swell like the River, heave and subside like the River of Egypt:** Amos knew that the Nile River rose and fell regularly. He pictures the land and people of Israel so shaken by judgment that they **heave and subside** like the rising and receding of the Nile River.

2. (Amo_8:9-10) The extent of judgment.

“And it shall come to pass in that day,” says the Lord GOD, “That I will make the sun go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in broad daylight; I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; I will bring sackcloth on every waist, and baldness on every head; I will make it like mourning for an only son, and its end like a bitter day.”

a. **That I will make the sun go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in broad daylight:** Because of the reference to celestial catastrophe, many think Amos is now looking forward to the circumstances surrounding the ultimate day of the LORD.

i. Though, some think Amos is only referring to an eclipse. “Two such eclipses have been calculated to have occurred in Amos’ lifetime: one in 784 B.C., the other in 763 B.C.” (Hubbard)

b. **I will make it like mourning for an only son:** Amos tries to capture the depth of the mourning with this metaphor.

We also remember the connection to Zec_12:10, which describes repentant Israel’s humble return to the Messiah in the last days: *And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.*

3. (Amo_8:11-14) The famine of hearing the Word of God.

“Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord GOD, “That I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD. They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the LORD, but shall not find it. In that day the fair virgins and strong young men shall faint from thirst. Those who swear by the sin of Samaria, who say, ‘As your god lives, O Dan!’ And, ‘As the way of Beersheba lives!’ They shall fall and never rise again.”

a. **I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD:** Most people think the worst kind of famine is **a famine of bread**, but Amos reminds us that the worst kind of famine is a **famine . . . of hearing the words of the LORD**.

i. Notice carefully the nature of this **famine**. It is not a lack of God’s Word, but a **famine . . . of *hearing* the words of the LORD**. “The condition described is that of being deaf to the words of Jehovah, not able to hear them. It is not a case of God withholding His revelation; but of people being in such a state that they do not see it, do not hear the words.” (Morgan)

ii. It is true that there may come times where there is a famine of God’s Word, either through neglect or unfaithfulness. But that isn’t what Amos means here. This is a problem with the *hearer*, not with the *preacher*. The preacher may have his own problems and the hearer as well may have his.

iii. 1Th 2:13 describes the right way to hear the Word of God: *When you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.*

iv. “We may question ourselves, whether we feed enough on God’s Word. If we would grow strong, we must feed,

not on condiments and sweetmeats, not on tit-bits and scraps, not on versicles and pious sentences; but on the strong meat of the Word, on the doctrines, histories, types of Scripture. Oh for more hunger and thirst for these!"

(Meyer)

v. Since it is true that *man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God* (Mat_4:4), then it is true that a famine of hearing God's Word is ultimately worse than a famine of bread.

b. **They shall wander . . . seeking the word of the LORD, but they shall not find it:** When we push away God's Word for a long time, we may find ourselves in the place where we **shall not find it** even if we wanted to.

i. We remember that the ability to hear God's Word and *benefit* by it is a gift from God, and a gift not to be despised.

ii. Jesus alluded to this principle in the Parable of the Soils and the Sower: *Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.*

(Mar_4:24-25) When we seek God, it generally becomes easier to find Him. When we push away God, it generally becomes more difficult to hear and receive His Word.

c. **Those who swear by the sin of Samaria . . . shall fall and never rise again:** God promises that the idolaters of Israel shall face judgment, and lasting judgment.

(Amo 8:2) He said, "What do you see, Amos?" I replied, "A basket of summer fruit." Then the LORD said to me, "The end³ has come for my people Israel! I will no longer overlook their sins.⁴

(Amo 8:3) The women singing in the temple⁵ will wail in that day."

The sovereign LORD is speaking.

"There will be many corpses littered everywhere!⁶ Be quiet!"
(Amo 8:4) Listen to this, you who trample⁷ the needy,

and do away with⁸ the destitute in the land.
(Amo 8:5) You say,

"When will the new moon festival⁹ be over,¹⁰ so we can sell grain?

When will the Sabbath end,¹¹ so we can open up the grain bins?¹²

We're eager¹³ to sell less for a higher price,¹⁴

and to cheat the buyer with rigged scales!¹⁵
(Amo 8:6) We're eager to trade silver for the poor,¹⁶

a pair of sandals¹⁷ for the needy!

We want to mix in some chaff with the grain!"¹⁸
(Amo 8:7) The LORD confirms this oath¹⁹ by the arrogance of Jacob:²⁰

"I swear²¹ I will never forget all you have done!²²
(Amo 8:8) Because of this the earth²³ will quake,²⁴

and all who live in it will mourn.

The whole earth²⁵ will rise like the River Nile,²⁶

it will surge upward²⁷ and then grow calm,²⁸ like the Nile in Egypt.²⁹

(Amo 8:9) In that day," says the sovereign LORD, "I will make the sun set at noon,

and make the earth dark in the middle of the day.³⁰

(Amo 8:10) I will turn your festivals into funerals,³¹

and all your songs into funeral dirges.

I will make everyone wear funeral clothes³²

and cause every head to be shaved bald.³³

I will make you mourn as if you had lost your only son;³⁴

when it ends it will indeed have been a bitter day.³⁵

(Amo 8:11) Be certain of this,³⁶ the time is³⁷ coming," says the sovereign LORD,

"when I will send a famine through the land —

not a shortage of food or water

but an end to divine revelation!³⁸

(Amo 8:12) People³⁹ will stagger from sea to sea,⁴⁰

and from the north around to the east.

They will wander about looking for a revelation from⁴¹ the LORD,

but they will not find any.⁴²

(Amo 8:13) In that day your⁴³ beautiful young women⁴⁴ and your⁴⁵ young men will faint from thirst.⁴⁶

(Amo 8:14) These are the ones who now take oaths⁴⁷ in the name of the sinful idol goddess⁴⁸ of Samaria.

They vow,⁴⁹ 'As surely as your god⁵⁰ lives, O Dan,' or 'As surely as your beloved one⁵¹ lives, O Beer Sheba!'

But they will fall down and not get up again."

(Amo 9:1) I saw the sovereign One¹ standing by the altar² and he said, "Strike the tops of the support pillars,³ so the thresholds shake!

Knock them down on the heads of all the people,⁴

and I will kill the survivors⁵ with the sword.

No one will be able to run away;⁶

no one will be able to escape.⁷

(Guzik)

Amo 9:1-15

AMOS 9 - RAISING UP THE RUINS

A. Judgment brings ruin.

1. (Amo_9:1-4) God's judgment is inescapable.

I saw the Lord standing by the altar, and He said: "Strike the doorposts, that the thresholds may shake, and break them on the heads of them all. I will slay the last of them with the sword. He who flees from them shall not get away, and he who escapes from them shall not be delivered. Though they dig into hell, from there my hand shall take them; though they climb up to heaven, from there I will bring them down; and though they hide themselves on top of Carmel, from

there I will search and take them; though they hide from My sight at the bottom of the sea, from there I will command the serpent, and it shall bite them; though they go into captivity before their enemies, from there I will command the sword, and it shall slay them. I will set My eyes on them for harm and not for good.”

a. **I saw the Lord standing by the altar:** In this final vision of Amos, He sees the Lord right at the temple, supervising the work of judgment. Amos wants us to know that God isn't detached from even His hard work of judgment.

i. “Like the boss of a demolition squad or the commander of an invading enemy, he snaps his orders for the smashing of the temple and takes personal responsibility for seeing that the last offender is brought to justice.”

(Hubbard)

b. **Strike the doorposts, that the thresholds may shake:** Often, the **threshold** is the structurally strongest part of a house. If the **doorposts** are broken, it shows that the whole house has fallen in. This is a poetic and powerful way to describe complete destruction.

c. **He who flees from them shall not get away:** This is God's way of saying, “You can run, but you can't hide.” Even if you tried to **dig into hell** or **climb up to heaven**, you can't escape your responsibility before God. A high mountain (**Carmel**) or the **bottom of the sea** can't hide you from judgment.

d. **I will set My eyes on them for harm and not for good:** An essential part of the Old Covenant was the promise of blessing or cursing (Deuteronomy 28, Leviticus 26) based on Israel's obedience. If Israel was in chronic, systemic disobedience, they could expect that God's eye toward them would be **for harm and not for good**.

i. *But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the Lord your God . . . And it shall be, that just as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good and multiply you, so the*

LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you and bring you to nothing; and you shall be plucked from off the land which you go to possess. (Deu_28:15; Deu_28:63)

ii. *And if by these things you are not reformed by Me, but walk contrary to Me, then I also will walk contrary to you, and I will punish you yet seven times for your sins. And I will bring a sword against you that will execute the vengeance of the covenant. (Lev_26:23-25)* iii. How much better to live under the blessing of the New Covenant! The promise of Rom_8:31 stands: *If God is for us, who can be against us?* We know that because of our standing in grace by faith, *God is for us*. All of the **harm** we deserve was perfectly poured out on Jesus Christ.

2. (Amo_9:5-10) Israel sifted among the nations.

The Lord GOD of hosts, He who touches the earth and it melts, and all who dwell there mourn; all of it shall swell like the River, and subside like the River of Egypt. He who builds His layers in the sky, and has founded His strata in the earth; who calls for the waters of the sea, and pours them out on the face of the earth; the LORD is His name. "Are you not like the people of Ethiopia to Me, O children of Israel?" says the LORD. "Did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt, the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir? Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD are on the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from the face of the earth; yet I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob," says the LORD. "For surely I will command, and will sift the house of Israel among all nations, as grain is sifted in a sieve; yet not the smallest grain shall fall to the ground. All the sinners of My people shall die by the sword, who say, 'The calamity shall not overtake nor confront us.'"

a. **The Lord GOD of hosts, He who touches the earth and it melts:** This isn't just a flowery introduction. When Israel remembered *who God is* - understanding all His might and glory - then they acted in a way that brought Him glory.

Constantly, Amos and the other prophets teach us *what we should do* based on understanding *who God is*.

i. Amos uses the title **Lord GOD** again - used 12 times in Amos 7-9, emphasizing the *sovereignty* of God. "That sovereignty is symbolized in the name of God that dominates this section - *Lord God*, literally 'My Master Yahweh.'" (Hubbard)

ii. "What counts is that God's presence is at home everywhere in the universe from top to bottom, and that presence is utterly dependable and permanently to be reckoned with." (Hubbard)

b. **He who builds layers in the sky, and has founded His strata in the earth:** This is a difficult passage to translate, and the New King James does it about as well as anyone else.

i. "It is hard to catch the exact picture of what Yahweh is building in verse 6. The heavenly construction may be a 'staircase' or a 'roof-chamber' . . . The earthly component is even more difficult to define precisely." (Hubbard)

c. **Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD are on the sinful kingdom:** It is striking - and terrible - to hear Israel called **the sinful kingdom**. God wants all His people to be deeply impressed that they cannot presume upon His mercy or their "chosenness."

i. Israel thought the **Ethiopians** were a remote and insignificant people, so God says, "**Are you not like the people of Ethiopia to Me?** " God also reminds Israel, "Yes, I brought you up out of Egypt, but I also brought **the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir**. Don't think you are so special that you become proud and presumptuous. You are a **sinful kingdom**."

d. **And will sift the house of Israel among all nations:** God will use Israel's exile among the nations to **sift** His people - not to destroy them, but to purify them. In it all, **not the smallest grain shall fall to the ground**. God's sifting only eliminates the *chaff*, never the **grain** - not even

the smallest grain. It is only **all the sinners of My people** who shall be guilty under judgment, those who presume too much and never humble themselves.

i. "I think I see you, poor believer, tossed about like that wheat, up and down, right and left, in the sieve, and in the air, never resting. Perhaps it is suggested to you, 'God is very angry with me.' No, the farmer is not angry with his wheat when he casts it up and down in the sieve, and neither is God angry with you; this you shall see one day when the light shall show that love ruled in all your griefs." (Spurgeon)

B. Israel restored to blessing and abundance.

1. (Amo_9:11-12) Restoring the house of David to Israel.

"On that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, and repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old; that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the Gentiles who are called by My name," says the LORD who does this thing.

a. **I will raise up the tabernacle of David:** Long before the time of Amos, the northern kingdom of Israel rejected the royal house of David. Here God promises to restore David's royal line - fulfilled in the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who is of **the tabernacle of David**.

i. This is an abrupt change from the strong message of rebuke and judgment. "The transition from verse 10 to verse 11 is the most abrupt and surprising in the entire book. The sword of judgment gives way to the trowel of reconstruction." (Hubbard)

ii. Without this last passage and change of tone, the book of Amos would be incomplete. "It is now declared that the reason of the divine judgment is not revenge, but the only way in which it is possible to usher in the restored order on which the heart of God is set." (Morgan)

b. **I will raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old:** God promised to take what was ruined and to **repair** and **rebuild** it. Sometimes God works in a completely new

way, letting the old die and doing a work of new creation (2Co_5:17, Isa_43:19). Other times God works to **raise up . . . ruins, and rebuild**. Both are glorious works of the LORD!

i. Amos knew that Israel was ruined, because he speaks of restoring **the tabernacle of David** instead of the *house of David*. A **tabernacle** is a house, but a humble one. This “Pictures the ‘house’ of David that was becoming a dilapidated shack; in Amos’ time the Davidic dynasty had fallen so low that it could no longer be called a house.” (McComiskey)

c. **And all the Gentiles who are called by My name:** God announces that even **Gentiles who are called by My name** will come under **the tabernacle of David**, a promise fulfilled in Jesus.

i. James, the brother of Jesus, quoted Amo_9:11-12 at the Council of Jerusalem. He used this passage to demonstrate that God promised to reach the Gentiles and to bring them into His kingdom under the Messiah, not under Israel.

ii. Act_15:17 has *So that the rest of mankind* instead of what we have in Amo_9:12 (**that they may possess the remnant of Edom**). This is because the Septuagint, the ancient translation of the Old Testament from Hebrew to Greek, translated **Edom** as “*Adam*” - “mankind.”

2. (Amo_9:13-15) Restoring abundance to Israel.

“Behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “When the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him who sows seed; the mountains shall drip with sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it. I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; they shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them. I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land I have given them,” says the LORD your God.

a. **The days are coming:** Under God's inspiration, the prophet Amos ends the book on a note of high hope, looking forward to a day of great prosperity and abundance in Israel. Under the reign of Jeroboam II, they *had* material abundance, but not in the LORD. God promises to restore them to prosperity *from Him* and *in Him*.

b. **When the plowman shall overtake the reaper:** Amos describes how miraculous and amazing God's blessing and restoration is.

i. When God releases blessing and restoration, fruit comes *quickly*. "*Ploughman and reaper* laboured separately . . .

but here they bump into each other, so abundant are the crops and so eager is the land to grow more." (Hubbard) ii.

When God releases blessing and restoration, fruit comes from *unexpected places*. Normally, grapevines don't grow well on mountains or high hills, but in the days of Israel's restoration even **the mountains shall drip with sweet wine and all the hills shall flow with it**.

iii. When God releases blessing and restoration, fruit comes with great quality (**drip with sweet wine**).

iv. When God releases blessing and restoration, the work is blessed - but it is still *work*. The **plowman**, the **reaper**, the **treader of grapes**, and **him who sows seed** still have their work to do. God doesn't just do it all for them, but under God's blessing and restoration the work is done with energy and joy. The **plowman** doesn't just wait around; he gets busy even if he starts bumping into the **reaper**! "One sign of a true revival, and indeed an essential part of it is the increased activity of God's laborers." (Spurgeon) v. However, even if it is not a time of remarkable blessing and restoration, the work of God still deserves our energy and effort. "The duty of the Church is not to be measured by her success. It is as much the minister's duty to preach the gospel in adverse times as in propitious seasons. We are not to think, if God withholds the dew, that we are to withhold the plough. We are not to imagine that, if unfruitful seasons

come, we are therefore to cease from sowing our seed. Our business is with act, not with result. The church has to do her duty, even though that duty should bring her no present reward.” (Spurgeon)

c. **I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land:** So many of the warnings from the prophet Amos are about the threat of coming captivity and exile. God promises restoration, and looks forward to the day when Israel will never again **be pulled up from the land.**

(Amo 9:2) Even if they could dig down into the netherworld,⁸

my hand would pull them up from there.

Even if they could climb up to heaven,

I would drag them down from there.

(Amo 9:3) Even if they were to hide on the top of Mount Carmel,

I would hunt them down and take them from there.

Even if they tried to hide from me⁹ at the bottom of the sea,

from there¹⁰ I would command the Sea Serpent¹¹ to bite them.

(Amo 9:4) Even when their enemies drive them into captivity,¹²

from there¹³ I will command the sword to kill them.

I will not let them out of my sight;

they will experience disaster, not prosperity."¹⁴

(Amo 9:5) The sovereign LORD who commands armies will do this.¹⁵

He touches the earth and it dissolves;¹⁶

all who live on it mourn.

The whole earth¹⁷ rises like the River Nile,¹⁸

and then grows calm¹⁹ like the Nile in Egypt.²⁰

(Amo 9:6) He builds the upper rooms of his palace²¹ in heaven

and sets its foundation supports²² on the earth.²³

He summons the water of the sea

and pours it out on the earth's surface.

The LORD is his name.

(Amo 9:7) "You Israelites are just like the Ethiopians in my sight,"²⁴ says the LORD.

"Certainly I brought Israel up from the land of Egypt,

but I also brought the Philistines from Caphtor²⁵ and the Arameans from Kir.²⁶

(Amo 9:8) Look, the sovereign LORD is watching²⁷ the sinful nation,²⁸

and I will destroy it from the face of the earth.

But I will not completely destroy the family²⁹ of Jacob," says the LORD.

(Amo 9:9) "For look, I am giving a command

and I will shake the family of Israel together with all the nations.

It will resemble a sieve being shaken,

when not even a pebble falls to the ground.³⁰

(Amo 9:10) All the sinners among my people will die by the sword —

the ones who say, 'Disaster will not come near, it will not confront us.'

(Amo 9:11) ***The Restoration of the Davidic Dynasty***

"In that day I will rebuild the collapsing hut³¹ of David.

I will seal its³² gaps,

repair its³³ ruins,

and restore it to what it was like in days gone by.³⁴
(Amo 9:12) As a result they³⁵ will conquer those left in Edom³⁶

and all the nations subject to my rule."³⁷

The LORD, who is about to do this, is speaking!
(Amo 9:13) "Be sure of this,³⁸ the time is³⁹ coming," says the LORD,

"when the plowman will catch up to the reaper⁴⁰

and the one who stomps the grapes⁴¹ will overtake⁴² the planter.⁴³

Juice will run down the slopes,⁴⁴

it will flow down all the hillsides.⁴⁵

(Amo 9:14) I will bring back my people, Israel;⁴⁶

they will rebuild the cities lying in rubble⁴⁷ and settle down.⁴⁸

They will plant vineyards and drink the wine they produce;⁴⁹

they will grow orchards⁵⁰ and eat the fruit they produce.⁵¹

(Amo 9:15) I will plant them on their land

and they will never again be uprooted from the⁵² land I have given them,"

says the LORD your God.

